

Message Text

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TO AMEMBASSY CANBERRA IMMEDIATE
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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS:EAGR

SUBJECT: AUSTRALIAN PROTEST RE PENDING BEEF LEGISLATION

REF: (A) CANBERRA 6747 (NOTAL); (B) STATE 208648;
(C) STATE 209350

1. REFERENCE MESSAGE REPORTED MR. MOORE-WILTON'S COMMENTS REGARDING "...THE ADMINISTRATION'S SUPPORT OF THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE ACTION" ON H.R. 11545. SUBSEQUENTLY THE AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY DELIVERED DIPLOMATIC NOTES CONCERNING BOTH BEEF LEGISLATION AND U.S. RATIFICATION OF THE INTERNATIONAL SUGAR AGREEMENT ADDRESSED TO SECRETARIES VANCE AND BERGLAND AND AMBASSADOR STRAUSS. THESE NOTES, INTER ALIA, PROTESTED A LACK OF CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN AUSTRALIA AND THE USG BEFORE THE ADMINISTRATION AGREED TO A POSITION REGARDING THE INTRODUCTION OF COUNTERCYCLICAL FORMULA AS
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PART OF THE MEAT IMPORT ACT.

2. BOTH WILTON-MOORE'S COMMENTS AND THE NOTES REFLECT AN APPARENT LACK OF GOA UNDERSTANDING REGARDING THE ADMINISTRATION'S POSITION ON A COUNTERCYCLICAL FORMULA AND THE EVENTS LEADING UP TO THE PRESENT SITUATION. BECAUSE OF THIS, ASSISTANT SECRETARY KATZ MET WITH ECONOMIC MINISTER SWIFT ON THE

AFTERNOON OF AUGUST 24 AND POINTED OUT STRONGLY THAT WILTON-MOORE WAS UNDER A MISAPPREHENSION IF HE BELIEVED THAT THE ADMINISTRATION SUPPORTED THE HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS POSITION ON H.R. 11545. THE ADMINISTRATION CLEARLY OPPOSES WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE BILL. ADMINISTRATION HAS INDICATED THAT IT WOULD SUPPORT BILL IF IT DID NOT ELIMINATE PRESIDENT'S WAIVER AUTHORITY, IT CONTAINED A FLOOR OF 1.; BILLION POUNDS AND WAS NO MORE RESTRICTIVE OVER THE COURSE OF THE CATTLE CYCLE THAN THE PRESENT LAW.

3. H.R. 11545 AS IT NOW STANDS SEVERELY LIMITS THE PRESIDENT'S AUTHORITY TO SUSPEND OR INCREASE QUOTAS. IT ALSO CALLS FOR A FLOOR OF 1.2 BILLION POUNDS. PRESERVING THE PRESIDENT'S PRESENT AUTHORITY UNDER THE MEAT IMPORT ACT WOULD ALLOW THE SAME FLEXIBILITY, WHICH HAS BEEN EXERCISED SEVERAL TIMES IN RECENT YEARS, TO RAISE ALLOWABLE MEAT IMPORTS ABOVE LEVELS STIPULATED BY THE ACT. THE ADMINISTRATION PROPOSED FLOOR OF 1.3 BILLION POUNDS ALSO INSURES THAT MEAT SUPPLYING COUNTRIES ARE GUARANTEED A HIGHER MINIMUM LEVEL OF ACCESS THAN THE COUNTERCYCLICAL FORMULA IN H.R. 11545 OFFERS. IN THIS CONNECTION USDA PROJECTIONS (REF B) ESTIMATE THAT IN 1984, 1985 AND 1986 THE COUNTERCYCLICAL FORMULA IN H.R. 11545 WOULD RESULT IN IMPORTS BELOW 1.3 BILLION. THESE, OF COURSE, ARE TENUOUS PROJECTIONS BASED ON ESTIMATES OF U.S. PRODUCTION. IT IS CONCEIVABLE THAT ALLOWABLE ACCESS LEVELS COULD BE EVEN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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LOWER IF THE H.R. 11545 WERE TO BE ADOPTED WITHOUT CHANGE.

4. THROUGHOUT THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS OVER THE PAST SIX MONTHS, CLOSE CONSULTATIONS BETWEEN THE AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY AND THE DEPARTMENT (AS WELL AS OTHER AGENCIES) ON EVERY FACET OF THE EFFECTS OF THE VARIOUS RESTRICTIVE MEAT LEGISLATION BILLS HAVE BEEN A NORMAL COURSE OF EVENTS. IN THE LAST FEW WEEKS SUCH CONSULTATIONS HAVE BEEN ON A DAILY BASIS. THE GOA CONCERNS WERE FULLY REFLECTED BEFORE CONGRESS. IT IS TRUE THAT THE PRESSURE OF EVENTS (I.E. THE DECISION REGARDING THE ADMINISTRATION'S POSITION WAS MADE ABOUT 12 HOURS BEFORE THE WAYS AND MEANS MARK-UP SESSION ON H.R. 11545) PRECLUDED FORMAL CONSULTATIONS WITH THE GOA. HOWEVER, THE AUSTRALIAN EMBASSY WAS INFORMED OF THE ADMINISTRATION'S POSITION AND THE RATIONALE FOR IT BEFORE THE PRESENTATION TO HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE. EMBASSY PERSONNEL, AT THE TIME, EXPRESSED APPRECIATION FOR THESE CONSULTATIONS, AND RECOGNIZED THAT THE PACE OF EVENTS PRECLUDED MORE FORMAL CONSULTATIONS.

5. IN THIS REGARD, KATZ REMINDED SWIFT THAT THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS IS NOT YET OVER. H.R. 11545 MUST BE VOTED

ON IN THE HOUSE; IF IT SHOULD BE SUCCESSFUL A SENATE-HOUSE
CONFERENCE IS REQUIRED TO RECONCILE DIFFERENCE; AND, THEN

THE PRESIDENT, DEPENDING ON THE NATURE OF THE BILL
PRESENTED, MUST DECIDE WHETHER TO VETO OR NOT. IF THE GOA
WISHES FURTHER CONSULTATIONS NOW, WE, OF COURSE, WILL BE
PLEASED TO DO SO.

6. SWIFT AGREED THAT THERE INDEED HAD BEEN CLOSE CONSUL-
TATIONS BETWEEN THE EMBASSY AND THE DEPARTMENT ON MEAT
MATTERS. HE BELIEVED THAT HE HAD ACCURATELY CONVEYED THE
EXTENT OF THESE CONSULTATIONS AND THE NATURE OF THE
ADMINISTRATION'S COUNTER PROPOSAL ON H.R. 11545 TO
CANBERRA. HE PROMISED, HOWEVER, TO INSURE AGAIN THAT
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THERE WAS NO MISUNDERSTANDING IN CANBERRA ABOUT THIS. HE
POINTED OUT THAT THE GOA WOULD HAVE LIKED "FORMAL CONSUL-
TATIONS" BEFORE THE ADMINISTRATION ACTION BEFORE THE
HOUSE WAYS AND MEANS COMMITTEE BUT ALSO RECOGNIZED THAT
THIS WAS NOT POSSIBLE GIVEN THE TIMING OF EVENTS. HE
INTENDS TO CONVEY OUR OFFER OF NEW FORMAL CONSULTATIONS
NOW BUT WAS UNCERTAIN WHETHER THESE ARE STILL DESIRED. CHRISTOPHER

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